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HEADLINE: Princeton President Fights Charges by Conservative Alumni

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BODY:

Princeton University's president has fired back at a group of conservative alumni who point to the teaching of Marxism, abortions in the health clinic _ and even the football team's record _ as proof the school's traditions are being eroded.

In a recent letter to its members, **Concerned Alumni of Princeton** warned that it was "no longer safe" to make donations to the 239-year-old university.

"Princeton is no longer the university you knew it to be," wrote CAP Chairman David P. Condit, whose group claims to have 4,000 supporters out of Princeton's 35,000 alumni.

Many of the charges were familiar to Princeton President William G. Bowen, who was inaugurated in 1972, the same year the CAP was formed. But for the first time, Bowen fought back.

He recently wrote a four-page letter to alumni who had inquired about the charges, calling some "misleading" and "outrageous."

Both Princeton officials and CAP leaders trace the birth of the dispute to social and cultural changes that swept the campus in the 1960s, when the Ivy League school first admitted women and demonstrations over Vietnam and civil rights divided students and alumni.

Some alumni were alarmed that faculty and students put their "political agendas" ahead of the university's interest, said Dinesh D'Souza, editor of CAP's magazine, Prospect.

He said students arriving at Princeton with "traditional values" are subjected to the "slack-jawed liberal consensus."

"Ask the university to name three conservative professors _ three Reagan supporters," he said. "I don't think they could do it. That's outlandish."

Robert Durkee, Princeton's vice president for public relations, said there were "avowed conservatives" on the faculty, but declined to name them.

"That's not the way we categorize our faculty," he said.

Bowen's response was triggered by a series of statements in Condit's letter to CAP members, written last autumn.

"It is no longer safe for alumni to make unrestricted gifts to Princeton," Condit wrote. "You may be supporting Third World junkets or the teaching of Marxism in the classroom, or activities of which you would never approve."

Condit charged that the administration wanted to end one of the more revered institutions for Princeton alumni, the eating clubs. Students pay an average of \$2,500 a year to join the clubs, which provide three meals a day and a locus for students and alumni socializing.

Five of the clubs select members through a "bicker" process, similar to the "rush" selection employed by fraternities. Three are only open to men.

Bowen wrote that he considered the independent clubs "desirable," but said they would have to be "open to all interested undergraduates" if they are ever subsidized by the university, as has been proposed.

Condit also wrote that 31 out of 33 pregnant students had received abortions after counseling at Princeton's health center in the 1983-84 school year, and charged that the health director "celebrated" the figures.

While the university does not dispute the numbers, Bowen said the complaint was "misleading" and "outrageous." He said the counseling is designed to "assist the student in arriving at her own decision, based on her own values, beliefs and circumstances."

Another rallying issue for the group, said D'Souza, has been the ineptitude of the football team. While he said alumni do not expect a football power at Princeton, its 16 losses to Yale in the past 17 years have been a particular sore point.

"You have to keep that grumpiness within bounds," D'Souza said.

Durkee said CAP's criticism has not affected Princeton's fund-raising efforts, noting it has passed the \$250 million mark in the third year of its five-year plan to raise \$330 million.

But Durkee acknowledged that Princeton officials are often asked about the charges from a group he maintains "simply does not feel constrained by the facts."

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